

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: February 15, 2018

Agenda Item: River Safety Closure to Replace Bridge at Bonner on the Blackfoot River (R2)

Division: Fisheries

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 Min

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Background: The purpose of this Blackfoot Biennial Closure Rule is to allow Region 2 staff to close the Blackfoot River from Weigh Station FAS downstream to the confluence with the Clark Fork River when necessary during reconstruction of the Interstate 90 bridges that span the Blackfoot River. Construction will occur over two construction seasons, with the east bound bridge being completed in one year and the west-bound bridge in the other year. There are public safety concerns on the lower Blackfoot River associated with removal of the Interstate-90 Bridge piers and the re-construction of the bridges. Region 2 would take guidance from MDT (Montana Department of Transportation) on when the river needs to be closed and for how long.

Public Involvement Process & Results:

If approved by the Commission, a public comment period will begin on February 20th and will close on March 19th.

Alternatives and Analysis: 1) The biennial closure rule is passed and we can close the section or portions of the section when MDT recommends closure for safety and logistical purposes; 2) The biennial rule is not passed and Region 2 does not have the ability to close the river and the public could be in harm's way during construction.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends that the Commission allow Region 2 to go out for public comment regarding this proposed biennial rule.

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopt the Department's proposed biennial Blackfoot Closure Rule.